

Appl. No. 10/628,420  
Reply to Office Action of 03/27/2006

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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-22. (Canceled)

23. (New) A method of improving the stability of a lemon/lime flavored beverage comprising the steps of:

(a) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage an acidulant system consisting of (i) citric acid and (ii) adipic acid having a smaller dissociation constant than citric acid; and

(b) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage a buffer salt system consisting of a citrate salt and a phosphate salt,

wherein the ratio of said adipic acid : said citric acid is 1 : 15 to 1 : 3.

24. (New) A method of improving the stability of a lemon/lime flavored beverage comprising the steps of:

(a) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage an acidulant system consisting of (i) a combination of phosphoric acid and citric acid and (ii) adipic acid having a smaller dissociation constant than both phosphoric acid and citric acid; and

(b) including in the lemon/lime flavored beverage a buffer salt system consisting of a citrate salt and a phosphate salt,

wherein the ratio of said adipic acid : said phosphoric acid : said citric acid is 3.0-4.0 : 1.4-2.0 : 1.0.

25. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the ratio of the adipic acid : citric acid is 1 : 10 to 1 : 4.

26. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the ratio of the adipic acid : phosphoric acid :

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citric acid is 3.3-3.7 : 1.6-1.8 : 1.0.

27. (New) The method of claim 23 and claim 24, wherein the citric acid is present in an amount from about 0.18-0.24% based on finished lemon/lime flavored beverage weight.
28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the citric acid is present in an amount from about 0.19-0.23% based on finished lemon/lime flavored beverage weight.
29. (New) The method of claim 23 and claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are independently selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium and calcium salts.
30. (New) The method of claim 23 and claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are independently selected from the group consisting of mono-, di- and tri-ionic salts.
31. (New) The method of claim 23 and claim 24, wherein the ratio of citrate salt : phosphate salt is from 1 : 2 to 2 : 1.
32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the ratio of citrate salt : phosphate salt is 1 : 1.
33. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.04-0.18% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.
34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.05-0.15% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.
35. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.25-0.41% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.
36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the citrate salt and the phosphate salt are present in a combined amount of about 0.3-0.36% by weight of finished lemon/lime flavored beverage.

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37. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored carbonated soft drink.

38. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the lemon/lime flavored beverage is a lemon/lime flavored cola beverage.